



**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
FOR LINCOLN COUNTY**

225 WEST OLIVE STREET, ROOM 100  
NEWPORT, OREGON 97365  
541-265-4145, FAX 541-265-3461  
[www.co.lincoln.or.us/da/](http://www.co.lincoln.or.us/da/)

**LANEE DANFORTH**  
District Attorney

March 30, 2022

Dear Lincoln County Citizens,

I promised you that I would be a District Attorney who was transparent and accountable to the public. I have kept that promise and will continue to keep it. For that reason, I am writing to inform you about the recent actions of our elected County Commissioners and appointed County Counsel that have significantly harmed the District Attorney's Office, crime victims, law enforcement agencies, and our community. While my concerns are many, this letter will focus only on my immediate concern with respect to a vacant detective position in the DA's Office. Prior to explaining the current issue, it's important for me to explain the role the Commissioners and County Counsel play in our county government.

Each elected official in our county government plays a different role. The Board of Commissioners' (BOC's) role is to provide the DA's Office with a budget based on the needs of the office as articulated by the District Attorney. There is transparency in the budget process because the public has the right to know how their tax dollars are being spent.

The District Attorney's role is to determine how to spend the money in the budget based on the needs of the office. In addition, the District Attorney's role is to decide what positions are in the office as well as the job duties of those positions. This logically makes sense because the District Attorney is in the best position to know what the office needs to meet the public safety concerns in our community. If the public is dissatisfied with how the District Attorney is running the office and spending money within the budget provided by the commissioners, the remedy is to vote the District Attorney out of office.

The commissioners' *only* involvement in the DA's Office should be budgetary. If the DA is requesting additional funding for the office, it's appropriate for the commissioners to consider whether the additional funding is necessary and a good use of public funds. Those decisions are made in public meetings where the citizens of Lincoln County can provide input about whether the additional funding is warranted.

When there are vacant positions in the DA's Office that are fully funded (i.e. the position is already included in the budget provided by the commissioners), the District Attorney has the authority to fill those vacancies without prior approval from the commissioners.

Right now, there is a vacant detective position in the DA's Office that is fully funded / budgeted and has been for more than 30 years. I hired current Sheriff's Office Detective Abby Dorsey to fill that vacancy and the county gave her a start date of March 1, 2022. On February 8, 2022, the commissioners decided to place the vacant position "on hold" despite already having offered the job to Detective Dorsey. There are several problems with that, including but not limited to the following:

1. The commissioners lack the authority to place the position “on hold.”
2. The commissioners made the decision behind closed doors without a public meeting, or an executive session as required by law.
3. The commissioners never contacted me regarding their decision. I found out about their decision in an email I received from the Assistant HR Director. That decision was made more than 7 weeks ago.
4. During the BOC meeting on March 23, 2022, Claire Hall stated the reason for the hold could not be discussed with the public because it was an “internal personnel matter.” In response, Doug Hunt said, “Well put.”
5. Despite her statement that the matter could not be discussed with the public, Claire Hall emailed a concerned constituent yesterday and said the reason for the hold was because the DA proposed several changes to the job description and all three commissioners were reviewing it. That is untrue.

In January 2021, I slightly revised the job description (pursuant to my job / authority as the elected DA) and the revisions were reviewed by HR and adopted by the BOC. Former detective Ron Benson worked under that job description for 12 months without issue or interference from the BOC. I did not propose additional changes in the job description. Even if I had proposed changes, the BOC lacked the authority to review and revise the duties in the job description. Even if the BOC had the authority to review and revise the duties, they could have done so in the three weeks leading up to Detective Dorsey’s March 1<sup>st</sup> start date.

6. Despite Claire Hall’s comment that BOC cannot discuss this publicly, County Counsel Kristin Yuille told the Newport News Times that no other DA’s Office in Oregon had a detective position and that having such position would be a conflict for the DA’s Office. She also indicated that former Detective Ron Benson didn’t do any detective work (also stated by Assistant County Counsel Brian Gardner). Yuille and Gardner’s statements are untrue. (1) several DA’s Offices in Oregon (Multnomah, Marion, Clatsop, Klamath, Deschutes, Lane, etc.) have detective/investigator positions. This is also true for DA’s Offices across the nation, (2) there is no conflict, and (3) Benson did a *significant* amount of investigator work.
7. Despite Claire Hall’s comment the BOC cannot discuss this publicly, Kaety Jacobson told me and at least one other member of the public that the reason for the hold was so the commissioners could ensure the job description adequately addressed the opioid overdose epidemic in Lincoln County. Commissioner Jacobson did not think it was important to seek the input of the elected District Attorney with respect to how the opioid overdose epidemic can be addressed. Had she asked for input, I would have explained the need for the DA’s Office to hire a *second* full time detective. Sadly, there have been suspected opioid overdose deaths and my office has no detective to investigate those matters.
8. Normally there is a deadline to request to be on the agenda for the BOC’s public meetings, however, the BOC has said if there is a time sensitive issue, it can be added to the agenda despite the late notice. I requested the detective position be added to the agenda for the BOC’s

public meeting on March 30, 2022. It is a time sensitive issue because if Detective Dorsey does not begin her position in the DA's Office on April 1, 2022, pursuant to county policy, she can't start until May 1, 2022, as the position must be started on the first of the month. My request was denied without explanation.

The BOC has exceeded their authority and their actions are negatively impacting the DA's Office, public safety, and our community, daily. I have reached out to the commissioners more than 10 times regarding this issue. Despite my attempts to communicate, none of the commissioners will meet with me and have a conversation. Commissioner Jacobson scheduled a meeting with Sheriff Landers and I to discuss the position. She cancelled the meeting because she was going to receive information from HR about the job description and wanted to review it prior to meeting. That was on February 28, 2022. I haven't heard anything from her since, despite me reaching out and asking to schedule another meeting.

The Attorney General's Office and I have reached out to County Counsel Kristin Yuille several times and have explained the far reaching and detrimental impact this is having and have requested the county act with urgency in filling the position. Disappointingly, our rational, professional, and patient approach hasn't worked. The BOC's actions are unprecedented, and I am concerned that County Counsel Kristin Yuille is advising the BOC to make decisions that have significant legal and financial consequences.

I frequently speak with other elected District Attorneys around the state about how their county government operates. Most counties have commissioners who prioritize public safety and who support their elected District Attorney. I am proud of the accomplishments my office has made during my first 15 months in office. Those accomplishments were made in the face of total opposition from county counsel and the BOC. I am confident that with supportive commissioners, who understand the limitations of their role and authority, we can and will radically improve public safety in our community. For now, I will continue to fight for the needs of our community, no matter the risk and no matter the cost.

The facts outlined above are all supported by written documentation in the form of email correspondence. On March 21, 2022, I sent a letter to the BOC and attached supporting exhibits to the letter. Because I value transparency and because this is a matter of significant public interest, I have attached the full letter I sent to the BOC, the attached exhibits, and some additional related documents.

The bottom line is this:

The DA's Office needs a detective, we hired one, we have the budget for one, and she needs to start on April 1, 2022. I intend to have Detective Dorsey begin working as a detective in my office on that date. I will continue to work collaboratively with the Sheriff with respect to Detective Dorsey's transition to my office. If the county interferes with my decision to have Detective Dorsey begin this fully funded position, I will consider the proper legal recourse.



Lanee Danforth  
Lincoln County District Attorney

**BOC LETTER**



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**LANEE DANFORTH**  
District Attorney

March 21, 2022

TO: LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
RE: DA'S OFFICE DETECTIVE POSITION

Commissioners,

The purpose of this letter is to respectfully request that the Board of Commissioners (BOC) allow Detective Abby Dorsey to begin her position as a Detective in the DA's Office starting on April 1, 2022. I want to recap what has transpired over the past couple of months and explain the urgent need to fill this position. I have attached exhibits that support my factual assertions.

**Existing position in the DA's Office**

As you know, the DA's Office has had a detective position for more than 30 years. In December 2021, Ron Benson retired after 19 years in that position. I submitted a requisition requesting to fill the vacancy and it was approved by Finance, Human Resources (HR), and all three Commissioners. (Exhibit 1). After a standard recruitment process, I decided to hire current Sheriff's Office Detective Abby Dorsey to fill the vacancy. On January 28, 2022, the county sent Detective Dorsey a signed written offer letter with a salary and start date of March 1, 2022. (Exhibit 2). Detective Dorsey accepted the offer in writing and submitted her resignation to the Sheriff. (Exhibit 3). Detective Dorsey's resignation was announced to all Sheriff's Office employees and was mentioned in a Yachats News article. (Exhibit 4).

On February 8, 2022, I received an email from Assistant Human Resources Director Jayleen Cook indicating the county was putting the detective position on hold because the BOC was going to review the job description and "**will be making revisions.**" (Exhibit 5). Detective Dorsey received a similar email and was told she could not begin her new position on March 1, 2022 as stated in her written offer letter. (Exhibit 6).

I reached out to HR, all three Commissioners, and County Counsel to ask how and why the decision was made to put the detective position on "on hold" and revise the job description.

**County Counsel Kristin Yuille / Assistant County Counsel Brian Gardner input on the position**

Ms. Yuille has indicated the county may eliminate the detective position from the DA's Office. There have been discussions that I have not been included in about moving the position to the Sheriff's Office instead of the DA's Office. Ms. Yuille has also indicated that the District Attorney is not responsible for conducting death investigations.

Assistant County Counsel Brian Gardner said the detective position in the DA's Office is not necessary. He stated the detective is responsible for organizing a warehouse and is essentially a "file clerk." According to Mr. Gardner, the District Attorney is not responsible for death investigations

and there are no administrative duties that accompany death investigations that the District Attorney is responsible for. Mr. Gardner described the scope of the District Attorney's role in unattended deaths as providing a "medical release". Mr. Gardner implied the position should be in the Sheriff's Office because it is law enforcement's responsibility to conduct investigations.

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In summary, I have attempted to speak with the BOC several times about the detective position, as have other concerned community members. The below information will provide some insight into the detective position in my office and the reasons why the vacancy needs to be filled quickly. My hope is that after you read it, you will do what is best for the DA's Office and this community and allow Detective Dorsey to begin working in the DA's Office on April 1, 2022.

### **DETECTIVE JOB DESCRIPTION**

When I took office in January 2021, I revised several job descriptions. Former HR Director Mike Hereford told me I had the authority to structure my office however I see fit, so long as it is within the budget. He also told me that I had the authority to assign, control, and manage the job duties of my employees. I was told the BOC and HR review and adopt the job descriptions so long as they are budgeted, comply with pay equity, and are in the correct classification. Mr. Hereford's guidance was consistent with what I was told by other elected District Attorneys throughout the state and is supported by Article 9 of the Lincoln County Personnel Rules.

I revised the detective job description and the changes I made are reflected in red in attached Exhibit 7. The changes were minor, but I did remove what Mr. Gardner refers to as "file-clerk" or warehouse duties. I did not believe those duties were a good use of taxpayer money and failed to utilize the knowledge and experience of a trained detective. HR and the BOC reviewed and approved the detective job description I revised.

### **DUTIES OF DA'S OFFICE DETECTIVE**

Below I have included some of the main job duties of the DA's Office Detective. This is a non-exhaustive list, but my hope is that it helps illustrate the urgent need to fill this position.

### **DEATH INVESTIGATION**

The District Attorney in conjunction with the medical examiner is statutorily responsible for death investigations. ORS 146.095(1) states, "The district medical examiner **and the district attorney** for the county where death occurs...**shall be responsible for the investigation of all deaths** requiring investigation." Under ORS 146.090, nearly every death that occurs outside of a hospital or care facility (often referred to as 'DOAs') require investigation, including overdose deaths.

Lincoln County's Medical Examiner (ME) is Doctor Marilyn Fraser. There are two practicing state certified Medical-Legal Death Investigators (MDIs) in Lincoln County who are appointed by the District Attorney to work under Dr. Fraser and assist with death investigations. The two practicing MDIs are Detective Abby Dorsey and Newport PD Sergeant Mike Leake. Lincoln County has had 64 DOAs thus far in 2022. That is a high number compared to previous years and equates to almost one death per day. Each time there is a DOA, the following process occurs:

1. Law enforcement responds to the scene, takes photographs, and does a cursory investigation

2. Law enforcement calls the on-call ME or MDI and gives detailed information surrounding the death. That information includes things like the location, name, date of birth, known medical conditions, known medications, alcohol use, drug use, next of kin, etc. Sometimes it takes multiple phone calls to gather the necessary information. The ME / MDI decides whether to release the body to the funeral home or whether they need to respond to the scene to take a closer look to determine if the death is suspicious.
3. Law enforcement calls the District Attorney, who makes the same inquiries as stated in # 2
4. Next of kin is notified
5. Law enforcement calls the funeral home (once the body is released by the ME/MDI and DA)
6. The District Attorney documents the information in #2 in an email that is sent to the DA's Office detective and ME / MDIs
7. Law enforcement fills out a detailed form and emails the form and photos of the deceased to the District Attorney, DA's Office detective and ME/MDIs

The above process can take hours and occurs at any time of the day or night. There are several times an ME / MDI and DA respond to a death scene due to the circumstances. There are four cases that come to mind within the past few months that I have responded to along with the ME / MDI. Three of those were suicides and one was an overdose death.

In the days following a DOA, a lot of work is required. The ME / MDI goes to the funeral home to examine the body, take additional photos, and draw toxicology if needed. After that, a form is filled out and the toxicology is mailed to the State Medical Examiner's Office. Toxicology is statutorily required in certain cases, and we are extremely fortunate in Lincoln County to have an ME / MDIs who can draw toxicology at the funeral home. Without that, bodies would have to be transported to the State Medical Examiner's Office in the Portland area until an ME could draw fluids for toxicology. That process would be expensive and would delay families putting their loved ones to rest.

For each death that is investigated, we are statutorily required to enter detailed information into a system called "MDI Log." The only people who can access MDI Log are MEs / MDIs which means the only people in Lincoln County with access are Dr. Fraser, Detective Dorsey and Sergeant. Leake. The information must be put into MDI Log prior to Dr. Fraser signing the death certificate. The funeral home will not release a body to a family without a death certificate. When information cannot be inputted quickly, it negatively impacts grieving families. The Detective in the DA's Office is responsible for inputting the information into MDI Log. Due to the vacant position in the DA's Office, there is a delay in the information being put into MDI Log. Dr. Fraser, Detective Dorsey and Sergeant Leake have gone above and beyond to ensure job duties of the DA's Office detective are getting done, however, they are not being appropriately compensated for it and there is no way they can continue to work at this current pace.

The Detective in the DA's Office is also responsible for answering the official Lincoln County Medical Examiner phone line (a phone that is specifically for families to call when they need assistance or information after losing a loved one). The DA's Office has had nobody to answer that phone since January 1, 2022. As a result, the funeral home is fielding calls from families. Those calls often get referred to my office and unfortunately, I do not have anyone in my office who can access MDI Log to provide information to grieving families.

If the DA's Office does not fill the detective position, I believe it may result in losing the ME / MDIs we have in Lincoln County. This would mean that patrol officers who respond to DOAs would spend hours and hours on scene waiting to try and contact someone at the State Medical Examiner's Office. The longer patrol officers wait at a death scene, the less calls for service they can respond to in our community. It is not hard to see how this would negatively impact the safety of our community.

## OPIOID CRISIS / OVERDOSE DEATHS

As you know, we have seen an increase in overdoses and overdose deaths in our community. There are multiple reasons for the increase, including the passage of measure 110 and the influx of fentanyl in Lincoln County. Fentanyl is often disguised in the form of fake oxycodone pills that are blue and have "M 30" imprinted on them and are often referred to as "dirty 30s." The pills have been seen nationwide and are being manufactured by drug cartels to look like prescription oxycodone, but they contain fentanyl and people who ingest the pills are dying.

The only way to combat this epidemic in our community is to prosecute drug manufacturers / dealers and ensure harsh penalties are imposed. On February 15, 2022, I attended a meeting in which current and past drug court participants talked about the far-reaching negative impact of measure 110 and fentanyl in our community. Those participants shared their beliefs about how to stop this epidemic and resoundingly said there needs to be increased enforcement and punishment. That is coming from people who have used and dealt drugs in our community.

Local law enforcement recovers controlled substances, including fentanyl, in large quantities on a weekly basis. It is becoming a common occurrence for law enforcement to find people in possession of well over 100 "dirty 30s" each week. We are fortunate to have great law enforcement personnel in Lincoln County, however, patrol officers who are recovering large quantities of drugs are not equipped to conduct in-depth investigations into the unlawful manufacture and delivery of controlled substances. Conducting those investigations requires specialized knowledge and training. It also requires time and the use of investigatory tools such as search warrants.

To increase enforcement, we need to reinstate the LINT team<sup>1</sup> which will require time and significant resources. As outlined above, there is an urgent need to investigate these cases now and the DA's Office Detective can assist local law enforcement with those investigations, including drafting and executing search warrants, conducting interviews, etc. The DA's Office Detective offers similar assistance to the Major Crime Team. Fortunately, Detective Dorsey was on the LINT team and has the specialized knowledge and training required to conduct legally sound drug investigations which result in successful prosecutions.

In February 2022, the BOC was provided with a 70-page report titled, "A Prosecutor's Guide to Opioid Overdose Investigations." The report was written and distributed by Prosecutors' Center for Excellence in January 2021. I have attached pages 14-18 of that report for your review. (Exhibit 8). Those pages in the report discuss the role detectives play in the District Attorney's Office as it relates to opioid overdose investigations. As an aside - I intend to present a decision package requesting another Deputy District Attorney and another Detective whose primary purpose will be to lead an opioid overdose task force and assist law enforcement with drug investigations. As I will outline in my decision package, I believe my office needs additional resources to combat this epidemic.

What I want to stress is that my office needs the *current* detective position for many reasons separate and apart from the opioid overdose epidemic. That said, this epidemic deserves a coordinated and immediate response from public safety leaders. The DA's Office can help with the response through Detective Dorsey's death investigations and additional investigations she can conduct until additional resources are obtained.

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<sup>1</sup> The Lincoln Interagency Narcotics Team (LINT) disbanded but was comprised of local law enforcement officers and a Deputy District Attorney. The purpose of the team was to investigate and prosecute the unlawful manufacture and delivery of controlled substances in our community.



## CHILD FATALITY REVIEW TEAM

The District Attorney is statutorily required to have a child fatality review team to conduct regularly scheduled child fatality reviews (ORS 418.785 and 418.747). The purpose of child fatality review is to help prevent severe and fatal child abuse and neglect in Lincoln County. The DA's Office detective is responsible for tracking child fatalities in our county, providing the District Attorney with that information for the child fatality review meetings and accurately entering detailed information about child fatalities and review meetings into an online system. It's a very lengthy and tedious process but a very important one.

## MAJOR CRIME TEAM AND CRASH TEAM

The detective in the DA's Office is a member of the Major Crime Team (MCT) and Crash Team. Losing the detective position in the DA's Office will negatively impact both of those teams. We have had several major crimes and fatal crashes within the past 18 months. The DA's Office Detective has responded to all major crime team call outs and most fatal crashes. The MCT is aware of the current situation and is in support of keeping this position in the DA's Office and filling it immediately.

## MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS

There are statutorily mandated multidisciplinary teams the District Attorney is responsible for, including Child Abuse and Elder Abuse. The DA's Office Detective is a member of both of those teams and is responsible for attending meetings and assisting with follow up investigations. It's not uncommon for a law enforcement agency to have limited time to conduct follow up investigation. The DA's Office detective is often able to assist with follow up that frees up law enforcement to do other things. One example of this is when there is an allegation of child abuse or neglect, and a child is forensically interviewed at the Children's Advocacy Center. Law enforcement is required to be at the interview. The DA's Office detective can attend those interviews (sometimes hours long), which frees up law enforcement to work on other important cases.

## LOCATING WITNESSES / VICTIMS / DEFENDANTS

The detective in the DA's Office spends a significant amount of time locating witnesses and victims for grand jury and trial and assisting with transportation if needed. The contact information we initially receive from law enforcement isn't always correct. Additionally, in domestic violence cases, victims often don't want to participate in the criminal justice process for a variety of reasons, including fear. Other times victims leave their house or leave the area. The detective has been able to effectively locate and assist victims and witnesses in coming to grand jury and trial. Every Deputy District Attorney and victim advocate in the DA's Office supports filling the detective position because they recognize how critical of a role the detective plays.

## FOLLOW UP INVESTIGATION

We frequently need follow up investigation done in our more serious cases. The best example of this is our domestic violence cases. If law enforcement can follow up with a victim within 24 hours of an abusive event, they can obtain statements we can later use at grand jury and trial, photograph and document injuries, and ensure the victim feels safe and is connected with resources. Often, patrol officers don't have the time to conduct that follow up investigation. In those instances, we can likely still proceed with prosecution, however, our cases are strengthened and victims feel supported when we can reach out within that 24 hour window.

One very helpful thing our detective does is listen to jail calls. All calls made in jail are recorded and sometimes defendants talk about the facts of their case, commit new crimes such as tampering with a witness, or make statements regarding the safety of potential victims or witnesses, etc. Having a detective who can listen to those calls can result in new evidence and helps ensure the safety of crime victims and witnesses.

### TESTIFYING / EXPERT WITNESS

Detective Dorsey is a qualified expert witness in the areas of strangulation, domestic violence dynamics and counterintuitive victim behavior. Being qualified as an expert witness is no easy task and to do so as a law enforcement officer is impressive. To my knowledge, Detective Dorsey is the only detective in the State of Oregon who has been qualified as an expert in those three areas. What the qualification means is that Detective Dorsey can testify at trial in cases where it would be helpful for the jury to better understand those three topics. She has testified during some of my measure 11 trials that have resulted convictions and lengthy prison sentences for violent offenders.

Because Detective Dorsey can testify as an expert witness, we will not have to hire as many experts to come to Lincoln County to testify and will save the county quite a bit of money. I broke down the cost of calling an expert in those practice areas and provided that to HR back in January. I have had two District Attorneys from other counties reach out to me and ask if Detective Dorsey could testify as an expert witness for them if they paid her to. While that would be a matter for the county to sort out, Detective Dorsey could potentially generate revenue for the county in this role.

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

There is overwhelming community support to keep the detective position in the DA's Office and to fill the position immediately. Some of that support comes from current ME Dr. Fraser, Deputy District Attorneys in the DA's Office, the Major Crime Team, the Crash Team, law enforcement agencies, treatment providers, current and former drug court participants, Lincoln County Health and Human Services, the recovery community, community partners, and more.

### REQUEST

I am respectfully requesting the BOC allow Detective Dorsey to begin her employment as a detective in the DA's Office starting on April 1, 2022. As the BOC knows, according to county policy, transfers can only begin work on the first of the month. This matter is time sensitive. If the BOC waits beyond April 1, 2022, we will have to go another month without a detective in the DA's Office.

I understand there has been discussion about transferring this position to the Sheriff's Office. For the reasons discussed above, it doesn't make sense for this position to be in the Sheriff's Office. The position is in the DA's Office because 70% of the job duties directly relate to the DA's Office and the remaining 30% of the job duties relate to death investigation which the District Attorney (not the Sheriff) is statutorily responsible for. Furthermore, it is an appointed position due to the MDI certification requirements. I fully support the Sheriff's Office and I intend for this position to work collaboratively with his department, as he and I discussed months ago.

This is a budgeted position that has existed for more than 30 years. The BOC approved the revised job description for this position in January 2021. The BOC approved my request to post and fill this vacant position in December 2021. On January 28, 2022, HR and the BOC (pursuant to HR's stated policies) approved hiring Detective Dorsey to start on March 1, 2022.

I am willing to work with the Sheriff on a transition period for Detective Dorsey so they are not left without a Detective or without someone who can train a future detective.

If I don't receive a response back from the BOC by the end of the day on Wednesday March 23, 2022, I will consider it a denial of my request. I urge you to put the safety and well-being of our community first and allow my office to fill this vacant position that has existed for 30 years.

Sincerely,

  
Lance Danforth  
Lincoln County District Attorney



# Requisition Detail

Detective (1600705)

Open

**EXHIBIT 1**

## Requisition Information

Requisition Number 1600705	Division N/A	Department District Attorney's Office
Working Title Detective	Job Type Full-Time	Class Spec Detective (105-1)
Vacancies 1	Desired Start Date 01/11/2022	List Type Regular
Owner Lanee Danforth	Hiring Manager Lanee Danforth	EEO/Census Data Template N/A
1. Is this a new position? No	HR Analyst Jayleen Cook	3. Is this position budgeted? Yes
4. If not budgeted, please explain. n/a	2. If no, who is this position replacing? What date will the position be vacant? Please use mm/dd/yy format. Ron Benson 12/30/21	6. If grant funded, please list the name of the grant, start date, and the end date of the grant in mm/dd/yy format. If yes, what FTE percentage of this position is grant funded? n/a
7. Is this position funded from the general fund? Yes	5. Is this position grant funded? No	9. Does this position generate revenue, increase efficiency, or fulfill a compelling need? Please explain: Yes. See #10.
10. Please provide any necessary justification for filling this position, please describe any budget adjustments made. The DA's Office Detective has many responsibilities, including: locating witnesses and victims to serve subpoenas for grand jury and trial, conducting	8. Please list position's Fund, Department, Object number. 101-130-90318	12. Select the exemption status: NON-EXEMPT
	11. Please list the range/steps that you would like to display on the posting. (Please note that steps will be listed no higher than step 3) Range 16, steps 1-3, \$62,234 - \$66,024	15. If no posting required, please explain. n/a

follow up interviews with witnesses and victims, attending forensic interviews for children who are suspected victims of child abuse, responding to major crime team call outs, drafting search warrants, attending autopsies, conducting death investigations, entering all death investigation information into a state database, notifying next of kin when there is an unattended death, etc. The DA's Office needs to fill this vacancy as soon as possible to ensure that the above mentioned responsibilities are completed and that there is a seamless transition with the least amount of negative impact on the community.

13. Select the Bargaining Unit:  
LCEA-GENERAL

16. Length of Posting  
1 Week

14. Posting Type  
County Employees Only

17. If other, please list preference here.  
n/a

20. What would a typical schedule look like for this position?  
Monday-Friday  
8am-5pm

23. If no, please state the FTE status here.  
n/a

26. Standard advertising includes: Lincoln County website, governmentjobs.com, indeed.com, and the Oregon Employment Department. Please list any additional advertising you would like to request for this position such as Linked In, University websites, etc.  
Standard advertising on the Lincoln County website is sufficient for this posting.

29. Who is the person(s) authorized to make the hiring recommendation following interviews?  
Lanee Danforth

18. How would you like the location displayed on the job posting? Select all that apply.  
Newport

21. If other, please list your preference here.  
n/a

24. Would you like to add supplemental questions to the application?  
No

27. If additional advertising is desired, please state the advertising Fund, Department, Object for billing purposes.  
n/a

30. Would you like candidate testing or video interviews to be a part of the interview process?  
Video Interview  
Only

19. If other, please list your preference here.

n/a

22. Is this position a 1.0 FTE?

Yes

25. If yes, please list the questions and/or topics you would like to have included.

n/a

28. Who would you like to participate in the SME (subject matter expert) review of applications? (Please note that all SME Reviewers will need to complete this step in the hiring process and scores are an average of all reviewers)

Lynn Howard,  
Marilyn Fraser

31. If you selected candidate testing, please list the type of testing you desire.

n/a

Comments

N/A

Authorization Comments

N/A

### Attachments

There are no available attachments.

### Approvals

**DA**

Lanee Danforth

approved on 12/21/2021 by Lanee Danforth



**FINANCE**  
Christina Shearer approved on 12/22/2021 by Christina Shearer

**County Administration**  
JANET HARRISON , +3 more approved on 12/22/2021 by DOUG HUNT

**County Administration**  
CLAIRE HALL , +3 more approved on 12/22/2021 by CLAIRE HALL

**County Administration**  
JANET HARRISON , +3 more approved on 12/27/2021 by Kaety Jacobson

**Human Resources**  
Nan Buck , +2 more approved on 12/28/2021 by Jayleen Cook

# EXHIBIT 2



## Personnel Department

210 SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Newport, OR 97365  
Phone: 541-265-0372  
www.co.lincoln.or.us

January 26, 2022

Abigail Dorsey

### Re: Offer of Lateral Transfer

Dear Abigail,

It is a pleasure to confirm our offer of lateral transfer as a Detective with Lincoln County District Attorney's Office with a **start date of March 1, 2022.**

Below are additional details of the position:

Job Title:	Detective	Hourly Salary:	\$41.21 (Range 16, Step 11, L20)
Hours per Week:	40	Overtime Status:	Non Exempt
Union:	LCEA	Probationary Period:	N/A
Work Location:	Lincoln County		

Effective March 1, 2022, you will be transferred from the LCDA bargaining unit to the LCEA bargaining unit. You will be paid out all comp you accrued while a part of LCDA. You will also move to the LCEA medical, vision and dental plan.

Also, effective March 1, 2022, you will no longer be a part of PERS and now will be eligible to a 401(K)-plan including the 11% county contribution. There is a 4-year vesting period.

Your longevity will remain as outlined above in your salary.

I am optimistic that your continued employment with Lincoln County will be a mutually rewarding and enriching experience. As provided in the Personnel Rules, your wage anniversary date will change in accordance with your start date.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [tal-khodhair@co.lincoln.or.us](mailto:tal-khodhair@co.lincoln.or.us) or 541-265-0372.

Cordially,

Tianna A. Al-Khodhair  
Human Resources Assistant

cc: Department, Finance, Personnel File





**Fwd: Offer Letter**

2 messages

**Abigail Dorsey** <adorsey@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: DDA Lanee Danforth <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>

**EXHIBIT 3**

Fri, Jan

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Abby Dorsey** <adorsey232@hotmail.com>  
Date: Fri, Jan 28, 2022 at 15:37  
Subject: Fwd: Offer Letter  
To: [adorsey@co.lincoln.or.us](mailto:adorsey@co.lincoln.or.us) <adorsey@co.lincoln.or.us>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Tianna Al-Khodhair <tal-khodhair@co.lincoln.or.us>  
**Date:** January 28, 2022 at 14:54:30 PST  
**To:** [adorsey232@hotmail.com](mailto:adorsey232@hotmail.com)  
**Subject:** Offer Letter

Good Afternoon Abigail,


Attached you will find your offer letter as discussed on the phone. I have also attached the benefit summary for the LCEA contract and information for the 401(K) plan.

2 things I failed to mention while on the phone with you was you will need to fill out the attached document to enroll in the 401(K) plan. If you would like to come to HR to fill it out we'd help. The other was you will be paid out your comp time but your sick and vacation will remain intact.






If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to myself or Jayleen.

--  
Tianna Al-Khodhair  
Human Resources Assistant  
Lincoln County Personnel Department  
210 SW 2nd St. | Newport, OR 97365  
Tel: (541) 265-0372 | Fax: (541)265-4906



**Abigail Dorsey**  
Lincoln County Sheriff's Office  
Detective  
Phone 541-265-0683  
[www.lincolncountysheriff.net](http://www.lincolncountysheriff.net)  
225 W. Olive St. Newport, OR 97365  
 

**5 attachments**

-  **01-Regence HDHP-4 Benefits Summary.pdf**  
2396K
-  **02A-Pro-Rated Benefits Costs All but LCDA.pdf**  
57K
-  **401(K) Enrollment.pdf**  
395K
-  **RetirementPlan Enrollment Book 3-21 (1) (22).pdf**  
1010K
-  **Dorsey, Abigail Detective- DA Office 3.1.2022.pdf**  
48K

**Abigail Dorsey** <adorsey@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: DDA Lanee Danforth <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>

Wed, Feb 9, 2022 at 3:20 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Abby Dorsey** <adorsey232@hotmail.com>  
Date: Tue, Feb 1, 2022 at 16:36

3/17/22, 9:08 PM

Co.lincoln.or.us Mail - Fwd: Offer Letter

Subject: Re: Offer Letter

To: Abigail Dorsey <[adorsey@co.lincoln.or.us](mailto:adorsey@co.lincoln.or.us)>

Thank you, I will be accepting the position and I will set up a time to come over and get some guidance on the 401k paperwork.

Abby

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 28, 2022, at 15:39, Abigail Dorsey <[adorsey@co.lincoln.or.us](mailto:adorsey@co.lincoln.or.us)> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]





Lincoln County Sheriff Curtis Landers, left, swears in Bo Douglas of Newport as the agency's newest patrol deputy last week. Douglas most recently was a youth pastor at South Beach Church and will be doing local training until May when he heads to the Oregon Police Academy for four months.

scheduled to graduate in March. They still will have to do their four months of local field training where they accompany another LCSO deputy "to learn how we do things here," Vertner said.

Vertner said there are two more deputies scheduled to start their field training with another deputy in March while they wait for openings in the state training academy.

"We're optimistic that we're going to hire the right people in the next few months, get people back out on the road and put all this behind us," he said.

Vertner said another change in procedure designed to be more efficient is to allow deputies – who can take their vehicles home – to attend daily briefings remotely instead of reporting to sheriff's headquarters in Newport.

The patrol division's three vacancies is not an isolated phenomenon to Lincoln County. Other agencies in Oregon – especially in metropolitan areas – are struggling as officers depart – and oftentimes leave the profession.

Previous departures from the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office, Vertner said, were usually to go to other agencies. But four departures last year were deputies getting out of law enforcement to become a firefighter, a teacher, a commercial fisherman, and to open a restaurant in another state.

"They might swap agencies for a change of pace or scenery," Vertner said, "but never to just leave. I've never seen this before, but it's happening all over the country."

The sheriff's office will also be looking to hire a detective to replace Abbey Dorsey, who is leaving to become an investigator for the district attorney's office. Her departure will leave the agency with one detective, Vertner said, when it would like to have three.

CDL DRIVERS NEEDED: Lincoln County Transit. Welcoming professional transit drivers to join our team. Applicants must possess a valid OR CDL and have a current DOT medical card. 541-265-4900

## EXHIBIT 4

**Classified Ad Posting is NOW AVAILABLE**

**FOR SALE • HELP WANTED  
LANDSCAPING • RENTALS  
HOMES FOR SALE • REPAIRS  
REMODELING • and MORE!**

Post your classified ad with us today.  
**CLICK HERE** for details.

### COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MAR <b>20</b> Sun	<b>10:00 am</b> Friends of the Yachats Library a... @ Yachats Commons multipurpose room
	<b>3:00 pm</b> Yachats Spring Solstice celebration @ Pavillion behind Yachats Commons
MAR <b>23</b> Wed	<b>10:00 am</b> Lincoln County Board of Commis... @ Online via GoToMeeting
MAR <b>28</b> Mon	<b>10:30 am</b> Yachats Rural Fire Protection Di... @ Yachats main fire station
MAR <b>29</b>	<b>2:00 pm</b> Yachats Planning Commission work... @ Online meeting via Zoom





Lanee Danforth &lt;ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us&gt;

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**Detective Position**

6 messages

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**Jayleen Cook** <jcook@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: Lanee Danforth <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>

Tue, Feb 8, 2022 at 4:19 PM

Lanee,

I wanted to inform you that the County is placing the Detective position in the District Attorney's office on hold. This means that the candidate, Abby Dorsey, will be unable to start on March 1, 2022, as we had discussed. The BOC would like to review the job description against our comparable Counties and will be making revisions. Until this occurs, we are unable to fill the position.

Thank you,

**Jayleen Cook, SHRM-CP**

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Assistant Human Resources Director

Lincoln County Human Resources Department

[210 SW 2nd St.](#) | Newport, OR 97365

Tel: (541) 265-0375 | Fax: (541)265-4906

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**Jayleen Cook** <jcook@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: Lanee Danforth <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>

Thu, Feb 10, 2022 at 2:25 PM

Lanee,

I wanted to let you know I received your voicemail but did not call you back as I knew you had spoken with David. Yes we do have the most up to date job description on file but are still getting feedback from comparable counties. We will let you know when we learn more or if we have additional questions along the way.

**Jayleen Cook, SHRM-CP**

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Assistant Human Resources Director

Lincoln County Human Resources Department

[210 SW 2nd St.](#) | Newport, OR 97365

Tel: (541) 265-0375 | Fax: (541)265-4906

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Lanee Danforth** <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: Jayleen Cook <jcook@co.lincoln.or.us>

Thu, Feb 10, 2022 at 2:27 PM

Thanks Jayleen. I sent an email to Chair Hall to seek clarification on what is going on with the job descriptions. Any chance we can meet about this today?

Lanee Danforth  
District Attorney  
Lincoln County District Attorney's Office

Phone: (541) 265-0251

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Lanee Danforth** <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: Jayleen Cook <jcook@co.lincoln.or.us>

Thu, Feb 10, 2022 at 2:34 PM

I also have some of the job descriptions already so I will forward those along to the BOC.

Lanee Danforth  
District Attorney  
Lincoln County District Attorney's Office  
Phone: (541) 265-0251

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Jayleen Cook** <jcook@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: Lanee Danforth <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>

Thu, Feb 10, 2022 at 2:46 PM

Lanee,

Can you send me those JD's as well? As for the meeting today, I can not speak for the board and their availability. I will say that as we are still collecting this information for the BOC and we have not sent information over at this point as it is not all compiled.

**Jayleen Cook**, SHRM-CP  
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers  
Assistant Human Resources Director  
Lincoln County Human Resources Department  
210 SW 2nd St. | Newport, OR 97365  
Tel: (541) 265-0375 | Fax: (541)265-4906

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Lanee Danforth** <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: Jayleen Cook <jcook@co.lincoln.or.us>

Thu, Feb 10, 2022 at 2:51 PM

I'm happy to share the ones I have with you and the BOC. I was just hoping to meet with you so I can better understand what is going on. I'm sure you can imagine my confusion.

Lanee Danforth  
District Attorney  
Lincoln County District Attorney's Office  
Phone: (541) 265-0251

[Quoted text hidden]



## Fwd: District Attorney Detective Position

1 message

**Abigail Dorsey** <adorsey@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: DDA Lanee Danforth <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>

Tue, Feb

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jayleen Cook** <jcook@co.lincoln.or.us>  
Date: Tue, Feb 8, 2022 at 16:19  
Subject: District Attorney Detective Position  
To: Abigail Dorsey <adorsey@co.lincoln.or.us>  
CC: Curtis Landers <clanders@co.lincoln.or.us>

Abby,

I wanted to reach out to you to let you know that we will need to postpone your start date in the District Attorney's Office as a Detective. The job description is being reviewed and updated. B moves forward with this position, we will reach out to you to provide an updated copy to determine if you are still interested in the position. I have copied the Sheriff on this email, so he is aw and to help maintain communication. Please let me know if you have any questions,

Thank you,

**Jayleen Cook**, SHRM-CP  
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers  
Assistant Human Resources Director  
Lincoln County Human Resources Department  
210 SW 2nd St. | Newport, OR 97365  
Tel: (541) 265-0375 | Fax: (541)265-4906  
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**Abigail Dorsey**  
Lincoln County Sheriff's Office  
Detective  
Phone 541-265-0683  
[www.lincolncountysheriff.net](http://www.lincolncountysheriff.net)  
225 W. Olive St. Newport, OR 97365



JOB DESCRIPTION  
**Detective**  
 District Attorney's Office

EXHIBIT 7

**POSITION INFORMATION**

<b>Job Number:</b>	105-1	<b>Union Status:</b>	LCEA
<b>Department:</b>	District Attorney's Office	<b>Classification Status:</b>	Full Time
<b>Division:</b>	N/A	<b>FLSA Status:</b>	Non-Exempt
<b>Reports To:</b>	<del>Office Manager</del> <u>Chief Deputy District Attorney</u>	<b>Pay Range:</b>	16
<b>Working Title(s):</b>	N/A		
<b>Date Revised:</b>	01/01/2020	<b>EEO Code:</b>	4

**JOB SUMMARY**

*Your job in the department is to . . .*

Conduct law enforcement criminal investigations and follow-ups.

*Your job also involves . . .*

Preparing cases for criminal court prosecution.

**DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

*Tasks listed are intended to be descriptive and not restrictive. An employee in this classification may perform any of the tasks listed; however, these examples do not include all the tasks which an employee may be expected to perform.*

*For each function, indicate the frequency each function is performed (D=Daily, W=Weekly, M=Monthly, Q=Quarterly, AN=As Needed). Estimate the distribution of total working time on an **annual** basis using percentages of not less than 5%. Total percentage of time must add up to 100%.*

**Number of Job Functions: 4**

JOB FUNCTIONS	FREQUENCY	ANNUAL % OF TIME
<b>Assist law enforcement in conducting investigations or following up on investigations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct and supervise crime scene processing.</li> <li>• Evaluate and process evidence for crime lab analysis.</li> <li>• Recover stolen and found property in accordance with state law. Make reasonable efforts to return property to the rightful owners.</li> <li>• Establish necessary contacts with other police agencies for exchange of information regarding vice, narcotics, and criminal activities.</li> <li>• <u>Conduct extensive interviews/interrogations of complainants, witnesses, victims, and suspects to obtain information, confessions, etc.</u></li> <li>• <u>Conduct follow up investigations, including taking photographs, videos, interviewing witnesses, victims, etc. at the direction of Deputy District Attorneys.</u></li> <li>• Conduct child sexual abuse investigations.</li> <li>• May serve on detached assignment as an investigator for other law enforcement agencies.</li> <li>• May assist in training new employees.</li> <li>• May operate in an undercover capacity as may be required in certain incidents.</li> </ul>	AN	<del>10%</del> <u>40%</u>
<b>Assist prosecuting attorneys in preparing cases for criminal prosecution in the appropriate courts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare affidavits for Search Warrants and criminal forfeiture.</li> </ul>	W	20%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend interviews of children in Lincoln County Children’s Advocacy Center.</li> <li>Appear and testify in Grand Jury and Court.</li> <li>Assist attorneys with evidence preparation as court exhibits.</li> <li>Locate, subpoena, and transport victims and witnesses as needed.</li> <li>Interact with defense attorneys and investigators towards an appropriate outcome to a case.</li> <li>Required to train in child sexual abuse.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Assists District Attorney as requested:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct extensive background investigations of prospective new county employees.</li> <li>May be required to conduct special internal investigations of county and other governmental agency employees.</li> <li>Participate in <u>Elder and Child Abuse</u> MDT, Major Crime, and Crash Team meetings as assigned.</li> <li>Respond to Major Crime and Crash Team call outs.</li> <li><del>Maintain trial exhibits returned from court.</del></li> <li><del>Maintain warehouse archives per retention laws and regulations and at the direction of the DA.</del></li> <li>Investigate sensitive, confidential cases assigned by the District Attorney.</li> </ul>	D	<del>50%</del> 10
<p><b>Assist the Lincoln County Medical Examiner as needed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Maintain minimum standards for a Medicolegal Death Investigator in Lincoln County as set forth by the District Attorney.</u></li> <li><u>Enter cases (documents, photos, etc.) into MDI log, to completion, at the direction of the District Attorney.</u></li> <li>Work with families, attorneys, and insurance companies of next of kin to coordinate as requested.</li> <li><del>Attend <u>body</u> examinations and autopsies. <u>Draw fluids and package appropriately for mailing to the State Medical Examiner’s Office, complete and correct submission of paperwork and communicate by phone and/or email with the on call State Medical Examiner as needed and at the direction of the District Attorney.</u></del></li> <li>Authorize release of reports and property in non-criminal cases.</li> </ul>	W	<del>20%</del> 30

**SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY**

1 - Little or no supervisor responsibility for work of others

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND/OR ABILITIES**

*To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The required knowledge, skills and/or abilities are listed below:*

**Knowledge of:**

- Extensive knowledge of the laws, rules and regulations pertaining to the District Attorney's office and modern police methods and procedures.
- Working knowledge of county geography.
- High degree of knowledge in new innovative law enforcement techniques maintained through continuing education.
- Confidentiality required in law enforcement field.

**Skill or ability to:**

- Skill in the use of cameras, equipment, and radio transmitters.
- Interview young children and victims of abuse.
- Convey information, ideas, and facts both orally and in writing to supervisors, colleagues, and individuals, inside and outside the county, using language and a format the audience will best understand.
- Utilize computers and other technology to communicate in written and verbal forms (e.g., word processing, texts, emails, spreadsheets, department-specific software).
- Effectively relate well with others, including supervisors, colleagues, and individuals inside and outside the county. Develop and exhibit a professional manner in dealing with others and maintain constructive professional working relationships.
- Take personal responsibility for the quality and timeliness of work. Show up to work on time, and follows instructions, policies, and procedures. Meet productivity standards, deadlines, and work schedules.



## MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Indicate the **MINIMUM** educational level required and the number of years of relevant experience required to perform the duties of the position.

### Minimum Education Level

1 - High School Diploma / GED

**Specifics:** Preferred Criminal Justice associates or bachelor's degree.

### Minimum Experience Level:

Two- Three years (if in specific skills/fields, list below)

**Specifics:** of law enforcement experience as a uniformed peace officer or as a detective in a government agency.

**Substitution Note:** Any satisfactory equivalent combination of experience and training which clearly demonstrates the ability to perform the above described duties is required.

### Certifications:

Certification(s) required (list specifics below)

**Specifics:** DPSST Police Certified, LEADS certified, OCFIT certified, MLDI certification-

### Driver's License:

Oregon Driver's License required

### Other Licenses:

None required

**Specifics:** NA

**Desirable Qualifications:** None

## WORKING CONDITIONS

**Job Conditions:** On-call, hazardous situations, extensive driving.

**Work Location:** Lincoln County

**Travel:** Travel outside of county and state as necessary for training, investigation, and witness/victim transportation.

## PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The physical demands are typical of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Physical capability to handle high mobility demands and complex personal interactions. Physical capability to interact with others and perform crime prevention and investigation techniques. Physical mobility to operate a motor vehicle, cameras, equipment and radio transmitters and firearms.

- **Physical Ability:** Tasks involve the ability to exert very moderate physical effort in light work, typically involving some combination of stooping, kneeling, crouching and crawling, and which may involve some lifting, carrying, pushing and/or pulling of objects and materials of moderate weight (12-20 pounds).
- **Sensory Requirements:** Some tasks require visual perception and discrimination. Some tasks require oral communications ability. Some tasks require the ability to perceive and discriminate sounds.
- **Environmental Factors:** Tasks are regularly performed with exposure to adverse environmental conditions, such as dirt, pollen, odors, wetness, humidity, rain, fumes, temperature and noise extremes, machinery, vibrations, electric currents, traffic hazards, animals/wildlife, toxic/poisonous agents, violence, disease, or pathogenic substances.

## REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Lincoln County is committed to providing reasonable accommodations as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This job description indicates, in general, the nature and levels of work, knowledge, skills, abilities, and essential functions expected of

the position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable qualified individuals with disabilities to perform essential functions.

**APPROVALS**

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Head Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Personnel Director Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Internal HR Only:*

**Skill: 5**

**Effort: 8**

**Risk: 2**

**Job Functions: 4**

**Education: 1**

**Experience: 3**

**Certs/Licenses: 3**

**Responsibility: 2**

**Job Conditions: 10**

## Part 1- Getting Started

The opioid crisis has spurred prosecutors to re-think their approach to drug crime, drug addiction and drug overdoses. Prosecutors are faced with a broad array of options on how to address these issues ranging from diversion to homicide prosecution. This paper will guide prosecutors toward a collaborative, data-driven approach emphasizing timely, thorough investigations of opioid overdose deaths, partnerships with law enforcement and collaborations with treatment programs and public health providers.

### Setting Goals

Sadly, there may be very few, if any, prosecutor offices that are untouched by the opioid epidemic and opioid overdoses, whether through their cases or by personal loss. Important conversations and changes can arise simply from acknowledging these losses and taking stock: What is the prosecutor's role in addressing this epidemic? What are the prosecutor's goals and priorities?

Modern prosecutors are broadening their goals and asking what part they can play in saving lives, while still holding drug traffickers accountable. When saving lives is the first concern<sup>24</sup>, new approaches reveal themselves. Prosecutors cannot go it alone or apply the usual playbook. The opioid epidemic calls for adopting complex, multi-disciplinary approaches that provide solutions to the opioid crisis on a case-by-case basis, ranging from treatment to homicide prosecutions.

Once a goal is set, the prosecutor office should undergo a review of its current procedures regarding when to prosecute, whom to prosecute and which charges to pursue. This assessment is needed to ensure that office practices are aligned with the stated goal and to strike the right balance between the keystone values of equal justice, public safety and accountability. See the Appendix for a self-survey designed to assist prosecutors in evaluating their current conditions and resources, identifying potential partners and initiating discussions about goals.

Though prosecutorial offices may be constrained by limited resources, *every office has the ability to do something.*

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<sup>24</sup> See Part 4 for an outline of how this approach is used by the Staten Island District Attorney's Office, New York.

# Staffing

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Once the mission and goals of an office are established, the office can assess the available staffing, resources and needs -- and get to work on developing written protocols. The following is a list of staff that can be hired or designated, if resources are available. In some instances, existing staff can be given these roles and in other instances the staffing needs can be filled by partnering with other agencies.

- **Prosecutor Liaison:** Designate an Assistant District Attorney to oversee opioid overdose investigations, review cases, network with local, state and federal stakeholders, and supervise any homicide prosecutions.
- **Addiction Specialist:** Hire a licensed clinician and/or social worker to oversee diversion programs, advise the chief prosecutor on policies and coordinate outreach to opioid overdose survivors or overdose victims' families. Staff from a local treatment provider may be able to fill this role.
- **Peer Advocate:** Hire a credentialed 'peer advocate' to respond to all opioid-related arrests, obtain permission from defense attorneys to speak to defendants about treatment options and conduct outreach to opioid overdose survivors and victims' families. A peer advocate with personal experiences of addiction and recovery may be particularly effective. Partnering with a local treatment provider may be an avenue to provide these kinds of service.
- **Analyst/Paralegal/Researcher:** Hire a crime analyst, paralegal or graduate student from a local university who can gather, clean and analyze the needed data and develop regular reports on emerging trends.

# Creating Partnerships with Law Enforcement

---

*"[Y]ou got to have the three "P"s on board to solve anything: ... prosecutors, ... the police and the people. You've got to have all three working together on any issue that you want to address, whether it's crime, or whether it's dealing with overdoses. You've got to have the buy in from all three, working together for that fourth "P," which is a partnership [...]."*

– ADA Tom Ridges, Executive ADA for Investigations, Richmond County

As the central law enforcement figure in many jurisdictions, prosecutors are well positioned to coordinate partnerships. Prosecutors are problem solvers: they are unafraid of hard realities, linked to all key players in local, state and federal government and entrusted with the mission of doing justice for all. They should take the lead in bringing

together law enforcement, hospitals, treatment providers, community agencies, schools, community members and families.

Partnerships with law enforcement are necessary at every step: at the scene of the overdose; in managing county-level overdose data; outreach to overdose survivors and victims' families; coordinating enforcement strategies with other jurisdictions; making charging decisions and working to prevent more overdoses.

Examples of various essential partnerships follow.

## **Local Law Enforcement and Investigators**

Prosecutors cannot undertake opioid overdose investigations without a dedicated and expert investigation partner who can respond to the actual scene of an overdose. In certain jurisdictions, partnerships stemmed from serendipitous encounters between concerned prosecutors and a single officer or investigator determined to make a dent in the local epidemic statistics; in others, partnerships are intentionally cultivated through training programs and assignments.

As can be seen in the examples below, prosecutors have formed partnerships with law enforcement in a variety of ways – and where local law enforcement does not have the resources to serve as the primary partner in opioid overdose investigations, prosecutors have developed other solutions.

### ***Montgomery County District Attorney's Office, Pennsylvania***

**Population: 850,000**

**Number of Prosecutors: 53**

In Montgomery County, PA, a county with 46 municipal police departments, the District Attorney's office developed their own Opioid Overdose Task Force, staffed by officers on 24-month assignment from their local departments who are trained to investigate opioid overdoses as homicide cases and supervised by an experienced homicide unit Lieutenant. Through a cross-designated Special Assistant United States Attorney from the DA's office, cases involving gang activity, significant quantities of drugs or cross-border trafficking are flagged to federal agencies such as the United States Attorney's Office, the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration and Homeland Security as needed.

### ***Worcester County District Attorney's Office, Massachusetts***

**Population: 830,000**

**Number of Prosecutors: 88**

In Worcester County, Massachusetts, a county with sixty police departments, the State Police operates two detective units within the District Attorney's Office. One of these units is tasked with investigating overdose deaths within the county at large. In the city of Worcester, however, the police department investigates all overdose deaths. The District Attorney's Office applied grant funds to appoint a Community Prosecutor who focuses on opioid overdose investigations and community outreach. The prosecutors rely upon the State and Worcester police to process every overdose death as a crime scene and conduct lawful searches of any electronic devices.

### ***Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office, Louisiana***

**Population: 390,000**

**Number of Prosecutors: 57**

In Orleans Parish, Louisiana, local police departments were overwhelmed with violent homicides and felonies, leaving insufficient resources and personnel for overdose death scene investigations. Prosecutors applied federal grant funds to ensure consistent processing of overdose death scenes, in partnership with the Coroner's Office. As a result, a specialized overdose investigator is dispatched to every death scene by the Coroner's Office, with the mission and authority to document the scene and take custody of any evidence.

## **Federal Prosecutors and Task Forces**

For local prosecutors, forming partnerships with the U.S. Attorney's Office can result in a significant expansion of resources. In Orleans Parish, Louisiana, Shelby County, Tennessee and Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, specialized ADAs have been cross designated as Special Assistant United States Attorneys. In that role, they identify state- or county-level narcotics cases that may be deemed eligible for federal prosecution, investigate them and take them to trial.

### ***Shelby County District Attorney General's Office, Tennessee***

**Population: 930,000**

**Number of Prosecutors: 110**

With cross-designation to the U.S. Attorney's Office as a Special Assistant United States Attorney, a Shelby County Assistant District Attorney has security clearance to receive and communicate law enforcement sensitive and secret-level materials; accordingly, he is able to review and identify cases suitable for various federal and state task forces depending on the location and nature of the arrests. As a member of the Shelby County High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force, the District Attorney's Office also contributes to and benefits from ODMAP, the regional data collection and overdose tracking initiative described below. Joining HIDTA has benefits beyond access to the ODMAP software. As members of their local HIDTA network, local prosecutors work with the DEA, Homeland Security and the FBI to share information about large drug trafficking organizations and decide how to divide up the work.

## **Data Collection**

Accurate and timely data, from a variety of sources, is crucial to an effective, informed response. This can be challenging as the data may be collected and stored in a variety of places including police departments, hospitals and emergency response providers, medical examiner offices, federal law enforcement and social service agencies. Prosecutors should work with law enforcement and government agencies to coordinate the accurate collection of data.

Initially some groups may be reluctant to share data, but prosecutors have identified reliable systems and compelling arguments. The clout of the prosecutor's office can often be used to bring people to the table and achieve consensus around sharing information. One effective argument for the collaboration is that accurate, immediate notification and data collection can be used to obtain needed funding and resources for the problem. Real-time data is particularly useful as it allows for a timely response and reinforces the cultural shift. As one example, Richmond County's Executive ADA for Investigations, Tom Ridges says<sup>25</sup>:

*"I get notified on every overdose, every overdose, it doesn't matter what time it happens day, night, weekend. And it doesn't matter whether it's a save or a fatality, I get notified, the DA gets notified. So when you're getting these notifications, you realize they're not just alerts: they're people."*

<sup>25</sup> Zoom interview with Thomas Ridges, Executive Assistant District Attorney, Investigations, Richmond County District Attorney's Office, New York. Notes on file with PCE. (06/23/2020).

# Additional Documents





Lanee Danforth &lt;ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us&gt;

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**Detective Position**

3 messages

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**Lanee Danforth** <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: Claire Hall <cehall@co.lincoln.or.us>

Thu, Feb 10, 2022 at 1:47 PM

Chair Hall,

On Tuesday I got an email from Jayleen stating the county is placing the detective position in the DA's Office on hold and that the BOC wants to review the job description against other counties and will make revisions. After receiving the email, I called Jayleen and left a voicemail seeking clarification. I know she's very busy so when I hadn't heard back, I called David yesterday and spoke with him.

David indicated the BOC wanted to put the position on hold. I asked if he knew why and he said, "they want to review the job description, that's all they said." He indicated he would reach out to Jayleen and call me back. I haven't heard anything back yet but I can imagine he's very busy at the moment. I thought it best to reach out to you directly given the time sensitive nature of this matter.

As you know, the number of unattended deaths in the county has skyrocketed and there is a great need to get this position filled quickly. Because of that great need, I requested Detective Dorsey start on 2/14. David attempted to get that done but explained that for reasons specific to finance / benefits, she'd have to start the first of the month. That makes complete sense to me and I'm grateful for David's efforts and explanation. Jayleen indicated that pursuant to county policy, the county doesn't submit a formal offer of employment to a candidate until finance and the BOC have reviewed everything and signed off. On January 28th, David and I were able to decide on a start date of March 2nd. David was able to get everything approved by finance and BOC and get the offer letter sent out to Detective Dorsey within hours. I appreciate David, finance's and the BOC's quick turnaround on that.

The offer letter sent to Detective Dorsey on January 28th included her salary and a start date of March 2nd. She accepted the offer and submitted her resignation on 2/2 with her final work day at the Sheriff's Office being on 2/28. As you can imagine after a month without a Detective / Deputy Medical Examiner in our office, my team was relieved to hear Detective Dorsey would be joining us soon. Law enforcement agencies, community partners and Dr. Fraser were also excited to hear the news that Detective Dorsey would start in the DA's Office on 3/2.

I am hoping you can shed light on what has occurred within the past 2 weeks that has caused the BOC to rethink their decision to approve this? I am happy to answer any questions the board may have of me and am also happy to gather information from other counties (I already have some job descriptions from other counties). Given how fast HR and the BOC have worked to help the DA's Office fill this important position, I am hopeful we can work together with the same urgency to resolve any outstanding issues prior to March 2nd.

Thank you,

Lanee Danforth  
District Attorney  
Lincoln County District Attorney's Office  
Phone: (541) 265-0251

---

**Lanee Danforth** <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: Claire Hall <cehall@co.lincoln.or.us>

Thu, Feb 10, 2022 at 1:55 PM

Chair Hall,

I misspoke. The start date is March 1. Below is the corrected information.

On Tuesday I got an email from Jayleen stating the county is placing the detective position in the DA's Office on hold and that the BOC wants to review the job description against other counties and will make revisions. After receiving the email, I called Jayleen and left a voicemail seeking clarification. I know she's very busy so when I hadn't heard back, I called David yesterday and spoke with him.

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I am hoping you can shed light on what has occurred within the past 2 weeks that has caused the BOC to rethink their decision to approve this? I am happy to answer any questions the board may have of me and am also happy to gather information from other counties (I already have some job descriptions from other counties). Given how fast HR and the BOC have worked to help the DA's Office fill this important position, I am hopeful we can work together with the same urgency to resolve any outstanding issues prior to March 1st.

Thank you,

Lanee Danforth  
District Attorney  
Lincoln County District Attorney's Office  
Phone: (541) 265-0251

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Claire Hall** <cehall@co.lincoln.or.us>

Fri, Feb 11, 2022 at 11:45 AM

To: Lanee Danforth <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>, David Collier <dcollier@co.lincoln.or.us>, Kristin Yuille <KYuille@co.lincoln.or.us>

Dear DA Danforth,

I understand your sense of urgency in filling this slot, However, I am in agreement with the direction recommended by staff that we need time to research the appropriateness of the position and whether there may be other ways to address this request. Initial review of counties that are similar in size and crime statistics, we found in their job descriptions and union positions, detective positions are only in the Sheriff's office. It is always with the purview of the commissioners to take a second look at staffing in an effort to best address staffing needs and fulfill our fiduciary responsibility to the county and its communities.

Claire Elizabeth Hall  
Lincoln County Commissioner  
My pronouns are she/her/hers  
[cehall@co.lincoln.or.us](mailto:cehall@co.lincoln.or.us)  
541-265-4100

[Quoted text hidden]



Lanee Danforth <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>

## Time to talk?

2 messages

**Lanee Danforth** <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: Douglas Hunt <dhunt@co.lincoln.or.us>

Thu, Feb 24, 2022 at 10:09 AM

Good Morning Commissioner Hunt,

I am hoping to speak with you about the Detective position in the DA's Office. Do you have any time available to talk with me today?

Thank you,

Lanee Danforth  
District Attorney  
Lincoln County District Attorney's Office  
Phone: (541) 265-0251

**Doug Hunt** <dhunt@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: Lanee Danforth <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>  
Cc: Kristin Yuille <kyuille@co.lincoln.or.us>, David Collier <dcollier@co.lincoln.or.us>, Jayleen Cook <jcook@co.lincoln.or.us>

Thu, Feb 24, 2022 at 1:04 PM

The HR Department is continuing to evaluate this detective position and looking at comparable counties. At this time I am waiting for their findings . I hope this answers your questions. Doug



**Doug Hunt**  
Lincoln County Commissioner  
541-265-4100  
[dhunt@co.lincoln.or.us](mailto:dhunt@co.lincoln.or.us)



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

[Quoted text hidden]



Lanee Danforth &lt;ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us&gt;

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**Fwd: Investigator in the DA office**

1 message

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**Lalori Lager** <lalori.lager@reconnectionsounseling.com>

Wed, Feb 16, 2022 at 7:49 AM

To: Jennifer Versteeg &lt;jbeckner@co.lincoln.or.us&gt;, Lanee Danforth &lt;ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us&gt;

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Lalori Lager** <lalori.lager@reconnectionsounseling.com>

Date: Wed, Feb 16, 2022 at 7:48 AM

Subject: Investigator in the DA office

To: Kaety Jacobson &lt;kjacobson@co.lincoln.or.us&gt;

Good Morning Kaety- Yesterday after Judge Bachart met with the newspaper to discuss the fentanyl epidemic I met with Lanee and Abbey Dorsey. The discussion turned to the role that Abbey would have taken in the DA office and how that role could be a MAJOR component in addressing this epidemic in our community. Lanee shared that the offer from the county was rescinded to Abbey, and the DA office was VERY CONCERNED about the repercussions. Lanee indicated that the Medical Examiner has made it clear that without an investigator in the DA office to support her position that she plans on resigning.

This would be devastating to our community, and the momentum that we are making to develop a task force which the investigator in the DA office would be a lead role.

I am asking that you read the link that I placed below as it outlines from an evidence based model how the investigator in the DA office could coordinate the investigations and respond in ways that could save lives in our community.

I do not usually get involved in county business, but the decision to "put off" hiring an investigator in my professional opinion is going to be like dropping a rock in a pond and the repercussions are going to be a much larger circle. This circle moves into my arena where people are dying from this addiction.

Are you open to talking about this situation?

<https://aequitasresource.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Seeking-Justice-and-Solutions-A-Prosecutors-Guide-to-Opioid-Overdose-Investigations.pdf>

Respectfully-

--

Lalori Lager M.A. CADC II

Executive Director

Reconnections Counseling

CELL PHONE: 541-961-1059

OFFICE PHONE: 541.574.9570

**If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far, go together!****-African Proverb-**

--

Lalori Lager M.A. CADC II

Executive Director

Reconnections Counseling

CELL PHONE: 541-961-1059

OFFICE PHONE: 541.574.9570

**If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far, go together!**



Lanee Danforth <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>

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## Tommorrow's meeting

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**Kaety Jacobson** <kjacobson@co.lincoln.or.us>

Mon, Feb 28, 2022 at 10:52 AM

To: Lanee Danforth <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>, Curtis Landers <CLanders@co.lincoln.or.us>

Hi Lanee and Curtis,

I was informed this morning that I will be provided some comparison information on the position we were going to discuss, sometime in the next day or two. I would like to review that information first before deciding how to proceed. So I will be cancelling tomorrow's meeting. Thanks for your understanding.

--

Kaety Jacobson  
Lincoln County Commissioner  
Lincoln County Courthouse  
225 West Olive Street, Room 110  
Newport, OR 97365  
[KJacobson@co.lincoln.or.us](mailto:KJacobson@co.lincoln.or.us)  
Office: (541) 265-4100  
Cell: (541) 270-5128



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## Lincoln City hires new city manager

*Daphnee Legarza has 26 years experience in city, state management*

BY MATHEW BROCK  
Of the News-Times

A little more than a year after its former city manager announced his departure, the Lincoln City City Council announced Wednesday it chosen

Daphnee Lagarza — currently an employee of the Oregon Travel Information Council — to fill the position.

Lincoln City released a press release about the new hire Wednesday, stating it plans to hold a virtual meeting in the following weeks and that more details will be available about the new hire



Daphnee Legarza

at that time. “After an extensive campaign to find an applicant for the city of Lincoln City city manager who has the qualifications and experience to maintain our population’s growth and needs, the city

MANAGER on Page A7

## DA at odds with county over detective position

BY KENNETH LIPP  
Of the News-Times

Lincoln County commissioners prevented a longtime sheriff’s office detective from starting a job with the Lincoln County District Attorney’s Office staff days after a final offer was extended and accepted, a move that alarmed those involved with local death investigations, and which District Attorney Lanee Danforth said was detrimental to public safety.



Lanee Danforth

The title of “detective” in the district attorney’s office is apparently unique to Lincoln among Oregon counties, though not necessarily in function. The job has existed in the local prosecutor’s office for three decades and was last held by Ron Benson, who retired in January after 19 years with the office. It was formally offered to Det. Abby Dorsey, a 23-year veteran of the Lincoln County Sheriff’s Office, Jan. 28.

According to the published job description, a revision of which was approved by commissioners last year, the position provides support in criminal prosecutions, death investigations, vehicle crashes, crimes involving children and “cold cases,” among other duties.

Dorsey already worked with Danforth in her law enforce-

ment capacity and also as one of the county’s part-time deputy medical examiners, called a “medicolegal death investiga-

tor,” under Medical Examiner Dr. Marilyn Frasier, a qualification that made her particularly valuable in the detective role, as it is included among duties in the written job description.

Dorsey accepted the job, gave notice of resignation from her position with the sheriff’s office and received an official start date of March 1 from the human resources department.

Then, on Feb. 8, human resources notified Dorsey via email that her start date would have to be “postponed,” as county commissioners were reviewing and updating the job description, and if they moved forward with filling the position, Dorsey would be contacted and asked if she was still interested. A human resources email to Danforth the same day said the county was placing the position “on hold” because the board “would like to review the job description against our comparable counties.”

Commissioners declined during their regular meeting Wednesday to comment publicly on the matter after Mark Watkins, a Newport entrepreneur and candidate for Commissioner Kaety

DETECTIVE on Page A8

## Spring break on the Bayfront



Tourists at Newport’s Bayfront watch and listen to the California sea lions who make their home in the harbor for most of the year. This week is spring break in Oregon and is generally regarded as the kick-off of the busy tourist season.

## 13-year sentence issued in road rage crash

*Judge denies request for a new trial*

BY KENNETH LIPP  
Of the News-Times

A Yachats man was sentenced to more than a decade in prison for menacing three motorcycle riders with his pickup truck on Highway 101 in south county last year, causing a wreck and serious injuries

Dane Lee Day, 55, was convicted March 9 on felony charges of assault with a vehicle, as well as misdemeanor counts, in an Oct. 7, 2021, collision of two motorcycles, one with two passengers, north of Yachats. He was

ROAD RAGE on Page A7

This Honda motorcycle was totaled during a collision Oct. 7, 2021, which left the driver, a passenger, and another motorcyclist with severe injuries.



## Seal Rock Fire hires Ewing as chief, suspends IGA talks

BY MATHEW BROCK  
Of the News-Times

The former Toledo Fire Department chief controversially hired at the Seal Rock Rural Fire Protection District last year as a consultant accepted an offer from the district’s board of directors to lead the district for the next two years.

During the Seal Rock Fire Board of Directors’ regular meeting on March 17, it voted to hire William Ewing to serve as the district’s fire chief via a

28-month contract. From here on out, Ewing will work full time at the district for \$5,600 per month and receive 10 vacation days each year, which the board states was roughly the same agreement the previous chief was given. Ewing was previously paid \$3,800 a month working part-time since he was first hired at the district in October.

There was a brief back-and-forth during the meeting as board member Mike Burt said he was concerned the board was moving too fast with the hire, that the contract didn’t include a previously agreed upon job description and other issues. The board quickly worked through those concerns, however, and ultimately

SEAL ROCK on Page A9

## Bird hazing won’t require closures on bay bridge

BY KENNETH LIPP  
Of the News-Times

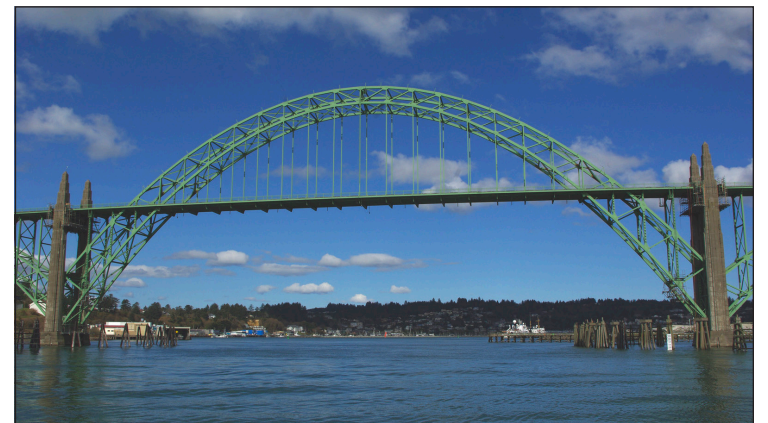
Efforts to temporarily relocate birds from the Yaquina Bay Bridge beginning this week won’t require road closures, but motorists might hear booming on evening crossings.

The Oregon Department of Transportation said Monday crews from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal

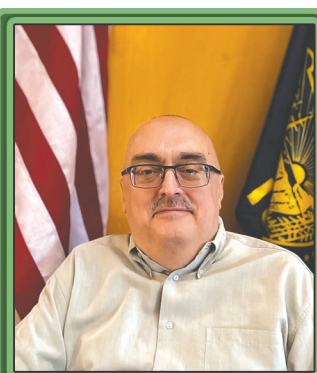
and Plant Health Inspection Service would be on site March 25 to begin work “encouraging the birds on the center span of the Yaquina Bay Bridge to relocate.”

Crews tested the technique on the Astoria-Megler Bridge earlier this month, briefly holding traffic during the hazing to see how the birds would respond.

HAZING on Page A7



On Friday, crews begin an effort to “encourage” roosting birds to nest somewhere other than the center span of the Yaquina Bay Bridge. There will not be lane closures, but motorists may hear booms during the evening.



Greg **Holland**  
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**DETECTIVE**

Continued from page 1

Jacobson's seat, asked for an explanation of the decision. Irrespective of their justification for examining the job description, Watkins said, it was unprofessional and disrespectful for the county to extend an offer of employment and provide a start date, only to renege on that offer after the candidate, a fixture in the local law enforcement community, resigned from their current position.

"Unfortunately, we're talking here about an internal personnel matter, and we do not discuss those outside of the organization," Commissioner Claire Hall told Watkins, to which Commissioner Doug Hunt replied, "Well said, Chair Hall." Jacobson was not present for Wednesday's meeting.

County Counsel Kristin Yuille told the News-Times earlier this month county commissioners were evaluating whether it was appropriate for a detective, a law enforcement role, to be housed within a district attorney's office, and they'd found no other Oregon jurisdiction of any size in which that was the case.

Yuille said such an arrangement was problematic at trial, for example, putting prosecutors in a position of calling staff within their own office to

testify in court.

"That's why law enforcement is separate from a district attorney's office," Yuille said. "Law enforcement investigates crimes, and district attorneys prosecute crimes." The office does still have another investigator position, Yuille said.

And though Benson was the office detective in name, Yuille said, "Was he doing detective work? No, he wasn't."

**UNATTENDED DEATHS**

In a March 21 letter to commissioners urging them to allow Dorsey to start work in her office April 1, Danforth took issue with characterizations of the detective position by the county counsel's office and said she was aware of discussions, in which she was not included, on moving the job to the sheriff's office.

According to Danforth's letter, Assistant County Counsel Brian Gardner, who previously worked as an assistant district attorney, "said the detective position in the DA's Office is not necessary ... is responsible for organizing a warehouse and is essentially a 'file clerk,'" and that "the district attorney is not responsible for death investigations, and there are no administrative duties that accompany death investigations that the district attorney is responsible for."

Danforth's letter enumerates the position's duties within her office, with emphasis on its role investigating unattended deaths in the county. She also pointed to Oregon statute that says medical examiners and district attorneys are jointly responsible for investigating unattended deaths.

For most deaths that occur outside a hospital and those involving homicide, suicide, accidents or drug overdose, among others, the county medical examiner must review and sign the death certificate with a determination as to cause, or a determination that a toxicology or autopsy is needed, based on an examination of the body by themselves or a medicolegal death investigator and information from law enforcement.

Information must then be entered into a state database, either by the medical examiner or medicolegal death investigator, before the certificate is signed. Dorsey and Sgt. Mike Leake of the Newport Police Department are the county's two qualified medicolegal death investigators authorized to access the database, along with the medical examiner.

A signed certificate is required before remains can be released to family. Lincoln County has no morgue facility — most remains are housed in one of Bateman Funeral Homes' locations until the death investigation is completed. Funeral home managing partner and funeral director Brian Norris contacted the News-Times earlier this month when he learned Dorsey's hire was put on hold.

Norris said the detective position was the funeral home's go-to for referring questions from family members of decedents

whose deaths require investigation.

He said he also believed the county medical examiner might resign if the detective position was left unfilled, and that without a replacement, local death investigations would fall to the overtaxed state medical examiner division, dramatically delaying the process.

"The state medical examiner has absolutely no bandwidth," Norris said. "So, bodies here would start backing up. We would be holding them or trying to find a place to store them."

Danforth's letter said the district attorney's office detective is responsible for answering the Lincoln County Medical Examiner phone line, to which Norris refers loved ones of deceased persons, who are now finding a "black hole" instead, he said. Like Norris, Danforth expressed concern about the possible resignation of the medical examiner.

Fraser, who sees living patients full-time in her family practice in Lincoln City in addition to her medical examiner duties, said she was worried leaving the position unfilled would degrade the overall quality of death investigations in the county, which she said she has dedicated herself to professionalizing during her more than a decade as medical examiner.

"If the position is not filled, I have not stated anywhere that I would leave, but I don't think I would have an alternative, because I don't have time to manage my living patients adequately and enter all the reportable cases into (the state database)," Fraser said. She said that process, and the gathering of the information needed to complete it, was extremely time-consuming,

and the job might require response to cases any time, day or night.

Fraser said Dorsey's part-time death investigation support was invaluable in recent months, and continued to be so after the hire was put on hold. (Dorsey since rejoined the sheriff's office.) The doctor said having a district attorney employee at the detective level dedicated to the task, with privileges to access the state database, was ideal.

"If (Dorsey) had not been helping, we would have just been swamped," Fraser said. "We were running three or four deaths a day for a couple of days," she said, and there was almost one reportable death a day for the first two months of the year. The trend has lately returned to normal.

She said having an experienced detective in the role was particularly helpful in identifying cases of overdose, of which Lincoln County has seen a dramatic increase so far this year, because they recognize evidence of substance use.

"I have concerns about where we are going, because I think it is important for everyone to be clear that the Oregon statute states that the medical examiner and the district attorney have jurisdiction over deaths that meet medical examiner criteria," Fraser said. "I think that if (Danforth) feels she needs this detective position to be continued — and I feel very strongly that it does, if we're going to do any kind of decent quality death investigation here — that it should, and I'm not sure why the decision has been removed from her."

Fraser said on multiple occasions she thought it critical to keep political issues away from death investigations.

"We're going to need a couple of different people available and trained, and I just can't do it by myself, and I'm not comfortable doing it if I think we're just scraping the surface," Fraser said.

Danforth told the News-Times she received conflicting explanations for freezing Dorsey's hiring. Commissioners Claire Hall and Doug Hunt both cited recommendations and an ongoing review by staff, she said, whereas Jacobson told the district attorney the hire was put on hold after a local substance abuse treatment professional reached out to the board regarding the rise in overdose deaths.

Lalori Lager, of Re-Connections Counseling, wrote a letter to commissioners expressing her concern over the rise in opioid-related fatalities

and urging concerted action. That communication was sent the day after human resources notified Dorsey her position was on hold.

"I am confused about why our current county commissioners are making decisions that are contrary to the needs of the district attorney's office, law enforcement, crime victims and our community," Danforth told the News-Times via email.

"I am disappointed that our commissioners make unilateral and uninformed decisions about the district attorney's office without consultation with the public and key stakeholders, including the district attorney herself," Danforth wrote. "Most of all, I am angry that while the commissioners continue to exceed their authority and interfere with the constitutional and statutory responsibilities of my elected office, our family members, friends and neighbors are dying and being victimized by increasing crime in our community. It is senseless, and Lincoln County deserves better."

In her letter to commissioners, Danforth said her office's detective was its representative on the county major crimes and crash teams, conducted statutorily required child fatality reviews, helped locate witnesses and could provide expert subject-matter testimony.

She told the News-Times interference with her office's staffing has impacted its capacity, influencing her decision to refer the prosecution of two women for the alleged murder of a 9-year-old girl to the Oregon Department of Justice. The department since dismissed charges pending review of additional evidence.

A review of county departments elsewhere in Oregon turned up no other mentions of a "detective" position within the district attorney's office. Counties vary on where death investigations are housed. Clatsop County Sheriff's Office has a Death Investigation Division staffing a chief and part-time medicolegal death investigators, whereas the Lane County's Death Investigation Division's three investigators are within the district attorney's office.

Danforth said most district attorney's offices have investigator positions such as the detective, and that the objection to use of that title was a matter of semantics. She said the other investigator mentioned by Yuille was a grant-funded position not guaranteed every year and was limited to support on domestic violence cases.

**Judith Vagenas**

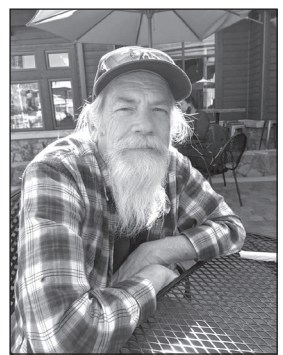
November 24, 1941 – March 1, 2022

Judith Carol Vagenas passed away at Northwest Memory Care in Florence, Oregon March 1, 2022 with her son Steven by her side. She had devoted her life to helping those less fortunate, loved all animals and served as a volunteer with several Lincoln County organizations. She will be missed by all that knew her. She was preceded in death by her husband Andrew Vagenas, and is survived by 4 stepchildren, Steven Oldham, Michael Oldham, Debbie Renney, James Vagenas; and sisters Kathleen Manning, Bonnie Valderas, Barbara Dapp, Pat Squaglia and Ellen Owens. Those wishing to honor her memory should consider making a donation to your local animal shelter. A celebration of her life will be announced at a later date.

**Stephen Harper**

September 18, 1953 – February 10, 2022

Stephen Thomas Harper loving husband and father of three passed away suddenly on February 10, 2022 in his home in Nevada. Steve was born to Edna Heubach and James Harper in Woodland, California on September 18, 1953. Steve moved to Reno with his parents where he attended Wooster High School. After high school, he served in the US Coast Guard and was stationed in Ketchikan, Alaska where he met the love of his life, Susan Lichau. Stephen and Susan were married on December 20, 1975. After his time in the Coast Guard, Steve pursued a career as a Real Estate Title Officer and was sought out by colleagues in the industry for his extensive knowledge of Title law. Stephen and Susan raised their family in Alaska, Oregon and for a short time in California before moving back to Anchorage, Alaska. He was very proud of his family and known by all for his kindness, compassion, and sharp wit. Steve loved baseball and shared his love of the game with his children, annually commiserating over another disappointing season by the Seattle Mariners, always joking that "next year is our year." Steve coached his sons' little league teams in Alaska and was instrumental in helping his sons and their teammates develop their skills during the short summers. He also loved cars—specifically old cars and enjoyed spending time tinkering in the garage with his daughter. Steve was also a master model shipwright, spending thousands of hours creating historically accurate ships from all periods of naval history. His works were admired far and wide and adorn the shelves of many friends and family. Stephen was preceded in death by his father, Jim, and his mother, Edna. He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Susan, his three children and their spouses: Nicole, Taylor & Jennifer and Travis & Cambria, his five grandchildren: Kasey, Mayan, Evelyn, Paige and Hadley, his sister Paula & Mike Rosaschi and his brother Craig & Judy Harper. He is also survived by his Aunt Helen Heubach and numerous nephews and nieces.



A memorial service will be held April 22, 2022 at Eastside Memorial Park in Minden, NV at 2pm where his ashes will be given back to the earth and a tree planted in his honor. In lieu of flowers, his family asks that donations be made to the American Heart Association or the American Diabetes Association.

**Charles "Charlie" Dee Coxen**

February 22, 1956 – March 5, 2022

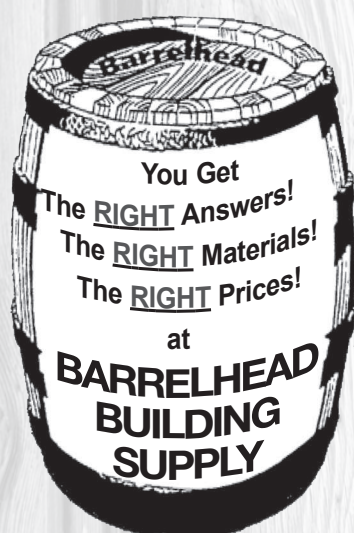
On Saturday, March 5th 2022, Charles "Charlie" Dee Coxen, loving son, brother and uncle, passed away at age 66.

Charlie was born February 22nd, 1956 in Westwood California to Dale Coxen and Georgia Telfer. Charlie attended Toledo High School. After relocating to Bend, Oregon in 1993, he pursued a career as a machinist. Outside of work, Charlie spent as much time as he could fishing for big trout in his boat in Wickiup Reservoir or hunting for mule deer out east. When it wasn't hunting season, he loved to cruise forestry roads with his mother, Georgia, and their dogs to take photos of wildlife and explore old historic sites. He had a sense of humor unlike any other and an ability to light up a room with his smile and wit.

He is preceded in death by his father, Dale, and brother Jim. He is survived by his mother, Georgia Telfer; brothers Bob and wife Vicky, and Jeff and wife Carole; nephews Jeff "JD" and Joe Coxen, James and Andy Ralston; and nieces, Amber Eugenio, Sherry Pence, Misty Pomada, Danielle Farnsworth, and Sierra Patterson

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Lanee Danforth &lt;ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us&gt;

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**Fwd: News Times article "DA at odds with County over detective position"**

4 messages

**Donni Kennedy**

Mon, Mar 28, 2022 at 4:11 PM

To: Lanee Danforth &lt;ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us&gt;

Here it is...

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Claire Hall <cehall@co.lincoln.or.us>**Date:** March 28, 2022 at 8:39:28 AM PDT**To:** Donni Kennedy**Subject:** Re: News Times article "DA at odds with County over detective position"

I do not believe the article provides a complete and accurate picture of this situation. Mr. Watkins' comments, quoted in the article, give the impression that Ms. Dorsey has resigned from her position in the Sheriff's Office. That is not the case. No resignation paperwork has been processed and she remains an employee in good standing of the Sheriff's Office. This is not in any way a reflection of Detective Dorsey's experience or qualifications. The only reason the position was temporarily placed on hold by the three of us was because the DA proposed significant changes in the job description from what it was under the previous job holder. It's our responsibility as commissioners to evaluate each position request in light of the needs of the office and the entire organization.

Claire Elizabeth Hall  
Lincoln County Commissioner  
My pronouns are she/her/hers  
[cehall@co.lincoln.or.us](mailto:cehall@co.lincoln.or.us)  
541-265-4100

On Fri, Mar 25, 2022 at 1:11 PM Donni Kennedy &lt;

&gt; wrote:

Dear Commissioners Hall and Hunt:

Regarding today's News Times article "DA at odds with county over detective position" by Kenneth Lipp, the way Detective Dorsey has been treated does indeed sound "unprofessional and disrespectful" to me, as a reader and resident of Lincoln City. I don't know any of the players named in the article. I have heard good things about Dr. Frazier, though, and together, she and Danforth are making a good case, according to this article, for why Detective Dorsey's appointment is needed and ought to be honored. Your position, by contrast, makes little attempt to be accountable or transparent and inspires no confidence at all in me. Has your position been fairly represented in the article? Because unless you and Commissioner Hunt can make a more reasonable accounting of your decision-making process in this matter, you've lost my vote next time around.

Dismayed and disappointed,  
Donally Kennedy

Sent from my iPhone





Lanee Danforth &lt;ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us&gt;

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## BOC meeting agenda

2 messages

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**Lanee Danforth** <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: Casey Miller <clmiller@co.lincoln.or.us>

Mon, Mar 28, 2022 at 10:37 AM

Hi Casey,

I'm requesting to be added to the agenda for the BOC meeting on 3/30. The topic of discussion is the detective position in the DA's Office. Last week Chair Hall indicated it's a personnel matter the board can't discuss, however, the position has already been filled and I am requesting the position remain in the DA's Office and that the commissioners allow me to use the public funds allocated for that position beginning April 1st.

I recognize it's late notice to get on the agenda but given the quick turnaround time (if the position doesn't start now we have to wait until May 1st) I'm requesting to be added.

Please let me know how to proceed.

Thank you,

Lanee

--

Lanee Danforth  
District Attorney  
Lincoln County District Attorney's Office  
Phone: (541) 265-0251

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**Casey Miller** <clmiller@co.lincoln.or.us>  
To: Lanee Danforth <ldanforth@co.lincoln.or.us>  
Cc: Asia Richardson <arichardson@co.lincoln.or.us>

Mon, Mar 28, 2022 at 11:14 AM

Lanee -

The Board will not be adding this to the agenda this week

Please be sure to get agenda requests in by Thursday prior to the following Wednesday.

Also, use the smartsheet form when possible... Asia is creating our agendas right now and she'll refer to the smartsheet for scheduling items.

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/4917a36e80eb428b834fe67f571c012a>

Thank you,

**Casey Miller**  
Public Information Officer  
Lincoln County Board of Commissioners  
c. 541.270.6796  
w. 541.265.0211  
clmiller@co.lincoln.or.us

[Quoted text hidden]